Nurturing the Seeds of the Kingdom

A Prayer to Invoke the Holy Spirit
At the Beginning of a Retreat

Virtue Link: Faith, Fortitude
Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Reverence

Introduction

As we begin this retreat, let us take a few moments to call upon the Holy Spirit to bless our reflection and prayer.

Opening Song

Please join in our opening song: (Sugg. *Spirit, Come* or other suitable hymn).

Opening Prayer

Lord and Giver of Life, You bring wisdom, healing and holiness to all who call on You. We ask You to bless our gathering with Your sanctifying Presence. Awaken within us the seeds of the Kingdom You have planted in our hearts at Baptism. May Your grace open our minds and hearts to the possibilities You envision for our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. We make this prayer to You in His name. Amen.

Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians,
(Gal 5, 22-23, 25-26)
The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. There is no law against such things. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.
(pause)
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Response: (In two choirs)

A.   In a society marked by personality cults, we are called to bear witness to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, and to reverence Him in the poor, the lowly, and the marginalized.

B.   In a culture where communication is increasingly commercialized, we are invited to prayer and worship.

A.   In an age which seems more fearful of the future, we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us.

B.   In a time which often seems to be without goals or enabling aspirations, we are challenged to declare ours and to dedicate our lives to their achievement.

A.   In a world which ignores the human thirst for God, we are called to share the living waters of our faith.

B.   In a time when there is little reverence for the image of God in the human person, we are summoned to care for human life with an ultimate respect.

(Excerpts from This Moment of Promise, taken from *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.* Institute for Catholic Education)

Prayer of the Faithful

1. Let us pray for the Church. That the Spirit of God might renew all members of Christ's mystical body to lead lives that bear abundant fruit. *We pray...*
   Lord, hear our prayer.

2. Let us pray for the world. That the hearts of all God's children might be opened to embrace the Spirit's call to live in peace and unity. *We pray...*
   Lord, hear our prayer.

3. Let us pray for those who suffer. That they might be comforted by a renewed generosity and care from those blessed with good health, material and spiritual abundance. *We pray...*
   Lord, hear our prayer.

4. Let us pray for our Catholic schools. That they may be places where the fruits of the Spirit will flourish and grow as a witness to the abundant life of grace we have been given in Christ. *We pray...*
   Lord, hear our prayer.

5. Let us pray for ourselves. That during this retreat, God's Spirit will renew our commitment to nurture the seeds of the Kingdom planted in our hearts at Baptism. *We pray...*
   Lord, hear our prayer.

6. For all our personal intentions…
   We pray...
   Lord, hear our prayer.

   Let us unite all our prayers with the prayer of Jesus using the words that He gave us: *Our Father...*

Sign of Peace
Let us begin this time of reflection and prayer with one heart and mind, extending to one another a sign of the peace of Christ's Kingdom.

Closing Prayer
Holy Spirit, your plans for us are beyond what we can imagine. As we begin this retreat we ask you… Awaken within us the ability to see something of the possibilities *You* see for us as followers of Jesus. Deepen our desire to nurture the gifts you have planted in our hearts. Help us to pursue with eagerness and joy the path of holiness and service to which we have been called.
We make this prayer to you through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Closing Song:
(Sugg. *Lord, Send out Your Spirit* or other suitable hymn)

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